

Investing in Success

Pinellas County Leads Florida in Incumbent Worker Training Grants



With 29 companies utilizing over \$725,000 in grant funding, [Pinellas County](#) led the state of Florida in Incumbent Worker Training grant awards over the past fiscal year. Nearly 2,000 Pinellas employees received training through the program.

The [Incumbent Worker Training](#) (IWT) program provides training to currently employed workers at Florida companies for the purpose of maintaining competitiveness in a global economy and for business retention. The program is open to businesses that have been in operation for at least one year and employ at least one full-time employee, with funding priority given to businesses in qualified [targeted industries](#). This program has been structured to be flexible to meet each business' training objectives. Businesses may use public, private or their own in-house training providers, based on the nature of the training.

Illustrative of the wide-ranging effectiveness of the program, the following three companies exemplify the flexibility of the IWT grant program.

[Gulf Medical Fiberoptics](#)

Gulf Fiberoptics, Inc. was founded in 1996 by Patrick Bennetts and Christopher Kerns with a vision to establish the company as a leading US manufacturer of fiber optic products. With the addition of Marcelino Afanador in 2002, Gulf Medical Fiberoptics was created to innovate and serve the medical device market. With an eye on advancement and the expertise of Mr. Afanador, the company has expanded its product line offering to provide a variety of fiber optic components and complete surgical systems to the

medical industry. Dedicated to quality, Gulf Medical recently received an IWT grant for \$9,375 to train 10 employees on ISO certification. This grant has “allowed us to provide further training to create an emphasis on manufacturing products with the highest level of quality at fair costs,” stated Marcelino Afanador, Vice President of Gulf Medical.

Learn more about Gulf Medical Fiberoptics at www.gulffiberoptics.com.

MTS Medication Technologies

Headquartered in Pinellas County for over 20 years, MTS Medication Technologies is an international provider of medication compliance packaging systems designed to improve medication dispensing and administration. Over the past several years the company has benefited from assistance offered by [Pinellas County Economic Development](#) (PCED) on topics including facility expansion, sales tax exemptions, and training grants. MTS’s 2007 IWT grant provided \$48,005 to train 74 employees in the areas of management certifications, robotics, and computer programs. “This grant has allowed us to increase the proficiency of employees within all departments on technologies and processes that are relevant to the success of our company in the global market place,” stated Carol Stringer, HR Manager with MTS.

More information on MTS Medication Technologies can be found at www.mts-mt.com.

TSE Industries, Inc.

TSE Industries, Inc., located in Pinellas Park, Florida, has been approved for a \$6,277 IWT grant to train 25 employees. The funding will allow 22 of these employees to complete Lean Practitioner training and three employees to complete Green Belt training, both conducted by St. Petersburg College Corporate Training. A custom rubber manufacturer and plastic fabricator, TSE also produces conveyor components, specialty chemicals and Millathane® millable urethane rubber. The IWT award will enable TSE to broaden the scope of the training program within the company. TSE Human Resources Manager Michelle Hintz-Prange attests, “Had the assistance not been available, budgetary constraints may have had to limit the amount of attendees. This assistance will help us to be more competitive with off shore companies and will help retain jobs and money here in Pinellas due to the increased efficiencies of the employees who receive the training.”

Visit TSE Industries, Inc. at www.tse-industries.com.

How can an Incumbent Worker Training grant work for your business? Learn more from a Business Development Manager at (727) 464-7332.